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The Commonweal

March 17, 1950

LENT IN FOCUS

H. A. Reinhold

Malaise: the Word for France

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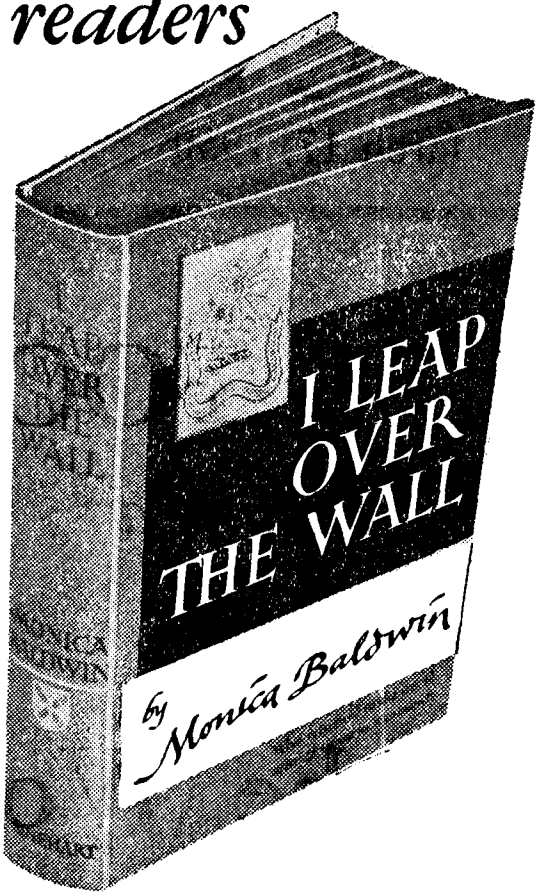

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May I urge you, somewhat in the spirit of Our Lord to Saint Paul on the road to Damascus, to continue to "go into the city" and continue to be an active citizen of it.

✠Bernard J. Sheil, D.D.,
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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

The Choice

EVER since some of our leading nuclear physicists took to the airwaves with their grim predictions and warnings of total destruction, the nation has been stricken with what has been flippantly called the "hydrogen horrors," an abiding fear that we are literally faced with the alternatives of freedom or planetary, global extinction. *"As for me . . ."* Patrick Henry said, but the way Dr. Szilard put it, the choice may no longer be one for individuals—persons, nations or even continents. It may be all or nothing; one world or no world. An awesome possibility, that, one calling for real global thinking; a possibility beyond the imagination of most of us, who are inclined to miss its meaning until we reduce it to the smaller, more manageable dimensions of personal extinction, the annihilation of wife, children, friends, neighbors and fellow-citizens. But even on this Lilliputian scale, the prospect is enough to quicken the heartbeat and bring cold sweat to the brow.

Still all is not black on the hydrogen horizon. For instance, there is the reassuring dictum of Dr. Hugh C. Wolfe, chairman of the Federation of American Scientists. "Life," says Dr. Wolfe, "is hard to get rid of altogether." He doesn't deny that hydrogen warfare can make great areas of the earth unfit for human habitation, and he agrees that the radioactivity released by an H-bomb explosion could probably extinguish most, if not all, forms of animal and vegetable life within limited areas. But things aren't really as bad as they seem. "We must remember that through the eons of the earth's development, nature has found ways to adapt itself to drastically changed conditions, and living matter in one manifestation or another may survive." Here is long-range, scientific optimism at its best. For smaller minds, Dr. Wolfe offers another hopeful straw: "Even when the H-bomb reaches the stage of development, there is a fair chance that it will not work at all—that it will prove to be a dud."

David E. Lilienthal, another atomic specialist, will have no truck with the "cult of horror." He has announced that, as a private citizen, he wants to dissipate some of the "black magic" about the H-bomb and to get people thinking of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. It is time, Mr. Lilienthal says, to discuss the immediate prospects for good in the atom "which are within mankind's grasp."

Such bracing confidence is a welcome note in the death-house atmosphere, but it doesn't change the awful facts of the matter, whether they be as drastic as Dr. Szilard's predictions or not. Even the most conservative scientists can chill the blood with their warnings.

Yet, however severe the temptations, of all times, this is a period when we can least afford a policy of panic. Fear and hysteria, which have long done good service for the men in the Kremlin, would again prove to be the most powerful allies they could have. Dr. Szilard and even those scientists who think he has severely overstated the case have made it abundantly clear that the free nations of the world are taking a desperate chance in resisting the Russian threat to freedom. But having to take this chance is not of our own doing. History, experience and our deepest convictions lead us to the realization that it is a question of taking the chance or knowingly accepting a world wherein life is not worth living. Ultimately, the choice is one between that liberty which is life and the certain death that has come to every man who ever begged mercy from the merciless.

Another Coal Settlement

WHEN the threat of government seizure, without increased wages, finally brought John L. Lewis and the operators together, both appeared to make sizable concessions. In granting a wage increase of 70 cents a day and a royalty increase of 10 cents a ton for the United Mine Workers' welfare fund, the coal companies figure that they increased costs by $1.35 per day per miner. Mr. Lewis, for his part, has withdrawn the "willing and able clause" which has permitted the miners to quit work at will, legally, and has also agreed that stop-work "memorial" observances will not exceed 5 days each year.

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• NEXT WEEK •

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP tells about a thriving experiment in the French Alps, where a parish priest is helping a whole valley to become communitarian.

"If Communism triumphs tomorrow," Abbé Poutrain told Mrs. Bishop, "we have to be ready to be within it a ferment of progress and renovation. Religious concern cannot be imposed upon people nor dictated. It grows out of an atmosphere, a climate, not out of discussions of doctrine."

On the face of it this seems to restrain the UMW in subsequent disputes with the companies. Can it be that Mr. Lewis is satisfied at last with a wage of $14.75 per day and 30 cents per ton for the pension fund? Or does not the failure of the lower court to cite the union for contempt (for lack of sufficient evidence) encourage him to think that henceforth unofficial work stoppages can neither be prevented nor penalized?

In any case Mr. Lewis has succeeded once again in causing a number of temporary dislocations in American industry. He has aroused the usual nationwide ire. Although the strike is over, the resentment over his high-handedness is not. The Government intends to bring the charges against the union to a higher court. Representative Howard K. Smith of Virginia is proposing the setting up of a national 21-member commission on strikes; among the things this group of men would determine is whether industry-wide collective bargaining should be permitted and whether labor unions should be subjected to anti-trust laws.

The Northern and Western coal operators, at least, are planning to appoint a special industry coordinator to deal with the United Mine Workers. Before the strike was settled President Truman called for a long-range study of the coal industry and the Senate Labor Committee currently has his request in hand. Such a study would deal with competition of other fuels, declining markets and the high cost of new equipment, on the one hand, and the rigors and uncertainties of the coal miner's livelihood on the other.

George Love, spokesman for the Northern coal operators, vehemently denies the President's contention that the American coal industry is a "sick industry." His evidence is that its productivity is from three to six times the productivity in any other country.

Mr. Love thereby overlooks the gravest symptoms. To begin with, demand for coal is shrinking to the point that three-quarters of the coal miners available can readily provide all that is needed without working overtime. (Consider that it took eight months and more of work stoppages to bring coalpiles to the crisis point.) The tactics whereby Mr. Lewis brought his union's wages and pensions to their present level are only partially responsible for the increasing shift to oil, natural gas and hydro-electric power. Postwar recovery in foreign coal regions is another element in the sharp drop in demand for American coal which cannot be reversed. Inadequate and continually shrinking demand is perhaps about as sure a sign of serious illness as an industry can manifest.

But with coal there is a symptom that is even worse. That is the precariousness of life and

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limb in American coal mines. Despite the strong UMW, the investigators of the Federal Bureau of Mines and the compulsive safety regulations enacted by a number of states, the record is appalling. When in the best working years some thousand miners lose their lives and thousands more are injured in various mining accidents, coal mining can scarcely claim to be in good health.

There is little Mr. Lewis's high wages—or even his pensions—can do to mend that.

The Saar Explosion

THE Saar, fought over by France and Germany for generations, has been since the war an economic dependent of the French. France was given control of the Saar's enormously rich mines, and a semi-autonomous government was formed by the Saarlanders.

In 150 years, control of the Saar basin has shifted five times between the French and the Germans, and the latest move of the French indicates that control of Saar resources is not going to shift again if the French can prevent it. They and the Saarlanders have agreed that for the next 50 years control of Saar coal mines is leased to France. The French are to give the Saar a share in profits; the Saarlanders are to have a larger degree of self-government under a rather extensive French veto. While M. Schuman says that the French are doing no more than they have a right to do, all agreements being provisional and subject to alteration in the German peace treaty, it is still plain that the Saar is being tied as closely as possible to France. To remove it at some time in the future will require major surgery.

The Germans have a right to their protests, if what they protest is *de facto* annexation. They have a claim to the Saar, based on the 1935 plebiscite, and have the privilege of presenting that claim at the peace treaty negotiations. Unfortunately, much of what Chancellor Adenauer has been saying sounds as discouragingly nationalistic as the action of the French appears to have been. Mr. Adenauer's statement that Germany would now refuse to take part in the Council of Europe comes in echo to High Commissioner McCloy's remark a few weeks ago: "Whatever the solution [of the Saar dispute], it must not stand in the way . . . of Germany's participation in the organization of Western Europe." The Bonn government is obviously getting itself into the best bargaining position it can manage.

The qualifying factor that the French keep pointing out, and on which the Germans set their hopes, is this: the final disposition of the Saar will only be made in the German peace treaty.

M. Schuman proposed last week that a three-power conference be called immediately to make that peace settlement with Germany. At the conference the whole question would have to be reconsidered, and under pressure from the United States and Britain it is possible that a solution could be found which would not be so damaging to European unity and so open to Russian propaganda use in Germany. France is interested in the Saar's coal. She has a right to war reparations, essential to the rebuilding of her industry, and to grant her a share in Saar production is a fulfillment of that right. The Bonn government has said that it would submit to any decision the Saarlanders themselves would make about political attachments. The Saarlanders seem more inclined towards autonomy than to a reunion with Germany. To establish an international authority as already exists in the Ruhr would be a first step to settling this old question on the ground of all Europe's needs. The wishes of the people of the Saar deserve to be considered—and the demands of integrating Europe's economy must be considered.

Lining Deep Pockets

SECRETARY Brannan has just made his annual report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1949. On the basis of his Department's figures he sees no reason why this nation will not be able to absorb even an expanded farm output if it adopts the right policies. By that, Mr. Brannan means his new program of production payments, especially where perishable products are concerned: instead of trying to store surpluses, as the Government does now, excess commodities would go out into the open market. And instead of loaning the farmer money on stored foodstuffs, the Government would pay him the difference between parity (supported) prices and what he actually receives on the market.

We have no intention here of going into our strong doubts about the proposed Brannan farm program. But we do want to follow up the Secretary of Agriculture's general idea that the way to meet the increasingly acute surplus problem is through official policies which will encourage sound farm practices.

What is the Government actually doing now? With an eight-million bale surplus of cotton and over 800,000,000 excess bushels of wheat, the Senate has just voted to increase cotton and wheat acreages for the next growing year. This simply entrenches the present Government policy of buying up farm surpluses without curbing production—an economically ruinous combination of strong price supports and weak production controls.

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Besides, the present guarantee of $1.90 per bushel for wheat makes production of that cereal a most profitable business operation. It is a spur to large-scale, mechanized cultivation. The financial section of the New York *Times* reports that "as a result the small farmer is disappearing. . . . The funds that the taxpayer must provide to support the present farm program go largely to the big farmers, many of whom have gross incomes of $100,000 a year and upward."

The mounting hoard of potatoes and other perishables is something to worry both producers and officials alike. The fact that millions are starving in the world while unused wheat piles up by the bushel in our American granaries presents a most serious challenge to the nation's sense of responsibility. Happily it is one which Secretary Brannan recognizes explicitly in his annual report. But, meanwhile, lining the pockets of big commercial farm operators at the taxpayer's and consumer's expense is clearly an intolerable abuse.

American Recovery Program

THE day may not be far off when a local shop displaying the slogan "Buy American" could find itself riding high on Attorney General McGrath's subversive list. Because a shop of this sort might well be wrecking the American Recovery Program.

This is the predicament that comes to mind as one reads Paul Hoffman's testimony to Congress on the future financing of the European Recovery Program. As he explained it, Europe, which has been purchasing billions of dollars worth of our products with money loaned by us, must somehow earn dollars to pay us back in dollars and to go on importing our products after 1952, when our loans will fall off. The objective is, in familiar words, to close the now-famous dollar gap between Europe and America. This means that the United States must import more European goods so that Europe can earn dollars from us.

Which means, in turn, that this foreign competition will hurt a small number of American industries. Nor will we be able to protect them with a high tariff wall if we ever expect Europe to earn dollars here. So Mr. Hoffman suggests something like an American Recovery Program: the government would subsidize these American industries for the time being, while they convert and re-tool for some other kind of production. Meantime, we buy European.

It is at times like this, when the industrial-mercantile economy we live by seems to go round and round like a revolving door, that we are tempted to repair to the basement for the hoe and start this thing all over again, from the Middle Ages on up. Escapism, in some form or other, is indeed sure to be an attraction now, when the idea of European recovery and economic "integration" begins to cause direct pain here in the United States. Already there are businessmen and Congressmen ready to go back to the high tariff and the good old days.

If we take their advice, we will be running out on the logical conclusions to which our own plans for the economic and political federation of Europe have led us. To face these conclusions will undoubtedly call for further sacrifices on our part. It is unfortunate that just as Mr. Hoffman was presenting his views to Congress, tempers were sharpened here when the French Assembly created an international episode of its own in deciding to turn thumbs down on Coca-Cola. In effect, Mr. Hoffman would have us reply by keeping our heads. All of us, including American business, can be grateful that as a businessman he has the vision and the steadfastness to sell this idea to Congress and so preserve the foundations of the Atlantic community.

R.S.V.P.

THE NATION, which is often full of surprises these days, recently made a proud announcement. Using its full inside cover and script type that somehow seems more appropriate to an announcement issuing from Wall Street than from the offices of a publication with a long fighting-liberal, butcher-paper tradition, The Editors took pleasure in announcing that Mr. Paul Blanshard, author of "American Freedom and Catholic Power," would be *The Nation's* special correspondent in Rome during the Holy Year.

Mr. Blanshard's reports should be interesting. Like most *Nation*-readers we look forward to what he will make of the goings-on in Rome. Mr. Blanshard on his obsession can always be depended upon for arresting copy.

But there may be more to this announcement than meets the eye, and that is considerable. The present editors of *The Nation* are apparently in open revolt against their old fair-minded, Oswald Garrison Villard traditions. Should we get ready for more announcements? May we expect The Editors to take pleasure one day in announcing that they have obtained the services of Mr. Gerald L. K. Smith to report on American Jewish affairs, Mr. John Rankin to keep us posted on interracial efforts, Senator McKellar to interpret the progress being made on the Valley Authorities, Senator McCarran to do a series on the DP problem, Colonel McCormick on the Marshall Plan, with maybe occasional dispatches from Lake Success, and Westbrook Pegler on just about anything? Much of that, too, would make arresting copy.

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Lent in Focus

The Lenten liturgy as a song of re-birth and resurrection

H. A. Reinhold

AS have all things instituted by Holy Church, Lent has a history and a long one. Naturally this history is one of ups and downs, of shifts of emphasis, of struggles between original conceptions and their reflection in the popular mind. Ideas are seldom comprehended in the pure state that they had when they were born in the minds of their creators; they lead instead the life that is destined for them as they take their shape: look at the Constitution and what happened to the original idea of the electoral college. Even persons, concrete and real as they are, accumulate legends which gradually become almost ineradicable, as the Lincoln legend, in spite of Sandburg, and the Republican version of Roosevelt, which maintains, in spite of all the efforts of his admirers, that he is about as bad as Stalin, if not worse. No wonder creations of the spirit suffer permutations; and these very changes that ideas undergo in the popular mind, changes which finally succeed in carrying the day over the original version, have, of course, like legends about persons, some kind of foundation, something they hang on to.

Let us, for argument's sake, assume the following to be the facts—and there is good reason to believe that this is what really happened: the early Christians were so intensely *living towards* the final return of Jesus in triumph, the present world to them was such a passing thing, that they followed the weekly Sabbath, the end of the week and the symbol of rest in the Old Covenant, with a vigil, which was called the "Lord's Day," prefiguring *"the* Day."

This observance had a twofold character. Since it followed the seventh day, it naturally was the *eighth day,* which meant, since the natural week has only seven days, that it was, so to speak, a step beyond, out of time into a new "aion," a new kind of era, something like eternity. It was therefore a constant reminder that Christians were waiting, suspended between Victory (the Paschal mystery) and Triumph (the Parousia, the "being present"; as Jesus said, using the present tense, "Before Abraham came to be, *I am.*") This vigil simply consisted of that one thing Jesus had left His followers on the eve of His departure into the "new aion," when He told them "to do this, keeping memory of Me until I come": the sacred banquet of Bread and Wine, symbolizing and making His separated Body and Blood, a sacrifice.

The records show that these vigil services, whose character is still preserved in our Ember Saturdays, in the vigil Masses and above all in "the Great Night," the supremely beautiful services of the Easter vigil, were usually held before dawn on Sunday, and afterwards the early Christians went to work. Only later did the Church permit a transfer of the notions of the Old Testament to the New Kingdom, and then she sought for herself Jewish institutions, which were fulfilments of the old prophecies, like a Christian Sabbath. So much for the *Eighth Day.*

★

OF course, since this vigil took place on the *first day* of the new week, it also served as a striking symbol of the other, the "Martha aspect" of the Church's mission: to go out and to teach and to transform the world. Here lies the inner-worldly transforming dynamism of Christian sacramental observance. The latest results of scholarly research seem to confirm that this weekly Pasch preceded the celebration of the annual Pasch; we may safely assume that it became the prototype of a more solemn and developed celebration of the annual recurrence of the Pasch. This development probably happened either while the Apostles were still with the Church or soon after. Its seasonal attuning to spring and re-birth helped to make Baptism its central theme, in its ancient and full rite of burial-resurrection. The ceremony of immersion (Baptism by immersion is still practiced in Benevento, Italy and is provided as an alternate in the latest Roman Ritual) seen as resurrection, carries with it a prevalently Pauline character. Saint John's favorite emphasis on re-birth is expressed in the beautiful images of Paschal poetry still sung on the occasion of the blessing of the baptismal font, as the womb of the Church, fertilized by the Spirit for the re-birth of the New Man, lends itself equally well to the ancient cus-

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tom of full immersion.

It is this double character of the *New Man,* the second Adam, Christ, and those mystically incorporated into Him by Baptism, and of Parousia, the *Coming* of the Lord and our *Waiting* for Him, our making ready for both, which formed and fashioned Easter. How the pre-Lenten and Lenten and Passiontide periods gradually developed and grew until they stretched forward to Ash Wednesday and Septuagesima, and how the jubilant celebration of rebirth-return expanded into the seven-times-seven festivity up to its fulfilment in the full Pasch of Pentecost (Greek for Fiftieth), is something too complex and involved to develop here.

*

THE result of these considerations is, then, that Lent, unless we assume that it was an accidental and haphazard conglomeration of things that grew like weeds, is inspired and designed as a preparation for these two mysteries which are the sum of the whole economy of salvation. Since the season was spring and since one can really be baptized only once in his life, two mental adjustments were made: spring brought the newness, the re-birth and resurrection, into clearer focus and, by the time our present standard texts had been chosen for the Latin and Roman liturgy, the concomitant idea of the final triumph had been lifted out and it developed by itself into a second cycle, which seems to start later in the year.

This new cycle opens with the great Ember vigil in the fall and the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. It finds its "Parousial" climax in the three eschatological (from the Greek *ta eschata,* the last things: Christ's return, the resurrection of all, the triumph of justice in His Judgment, the ensuing Glory) flourishes of the Advent cycle: Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas. The removal of one of the component ideas from this season took away quite a bit of its original emphasis on the Lord's Coming and magnified and enlarged the re-birth and resurrection aspect. Further weight was given to the spring and re-birth aspects by the fact that Lent grew into the period set aside for the immediate preparation for Baptism. It became quite early the baptismal retreat of the Church. If we remember that the exorcisms, and the rendering of the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer by the candidates, the opening of the ears and nostrils for better *"sapere,"* spiritual discrimination, and other ceremonies which are now telescoped into one rite that often seems like a legal performance, if we remember that all this was originally spaced with great sagacity, in a natural rhythm over the whole of Lent, then it becomes even more obvious that the task of Lent is the building of the New Adam, the conditioning of all that in man which is to be the soil for spiritual growth.

That this was not only done by an expert in psychology, education and spiritual discipline, but by a genius with almost musical talents, becomes evident when we thumb meditatively through the texts of our Missal, starting with the somber chords of Septuagesima and ending in the glowing and brilliant finale of Whitsunday. There are no discrepancies, no *"non sequiturs";* there is no piling up instead of growing; you notice no jerking from one attitude into another. All is organic growth with due transition and sensible sequence. There are none of the abrupt and incoherent changes of unguarded tradition, whim and emotion. The subtle allusions, the over-tones and the ascending and descending climaxes betray the hand of great masters. If such an analysis were proof, one might suspect that a Father like Damasus or Gregory the Great, whose rôle has so long been dismissed as a pious legend, was the principal architect or composer of this theandric song of redemption.

*

THE other adjustment of our mind is needed because of the simple fact that few of us are really preparing for Baptism; since the "Parousial" aspect has largely been moved to the second cycle of the Church year, this annual retreat must be actualized in a new way. It would be the simplest thing in the world to lay the emphasis on an annual rebuilding of the New Man in us, or what the time-worn terminology of our day calls a renewal of Baptism. Not of baptismal vows only, because that could be one of those grand and empty ceremonies which have taken the place of living liturgy in so many instances. The fulness of Baptism is lived in a participation of mind, heart and body in the three last days of Holy Week, after six weeks or more of careful, gradual and complex conditioning. If we had a liturgy in the people's tongue, if then the people came to the truly important services on these great days (instead of crowding their substitutes), if Rome permitted the restoration, as we hope it finally will, of the "Great Night" of the Easter vigil, the secondary observances like fasting and other taming devices of wild and fallen nature would become natural corollaries and there could not but result a rebirth and resurrection of the Church and her members each Easter.

As everywhere else, here, too, it is hard for later generations to grasp and maintain the grand sweep of the towering spiritual structure made of the granite blocks of Redemption, ordered and arranged in a composition whose theme and purpose we have outlined, and tightly cemented in majesty and ardor by logic, and by respect for nature and growth and the idea of infinite pro-

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gression, beaten out by the rhythm of nature. The ages following the Fathers were analytic, curious, playful, satisfied with the idea that all was already fulfilled. Instead of straining forward collectively, they looked back and picked details from the whole, as one might go home after a symphony humming or whistling themes of impressive tunes without being able to retain the full work. The subordinate things became all-important: the penitential character—without it there is no preparation for God's contemporaneity; the attendance at, more than the sequence of daily Masses, the earnest of withdrawn living, the "pasch-ektomy" or isolation of the physical and psychic suffering of Our Savior; in short, the things one does and those that hurt.

This was accompanied by the great leveling tendency of all popular activities, the drive toward repetition and monotony, the chafing away of the finely chiseled, the wearing away of the subtly rhythmed, the preference for the rudimentary, ordinary and bulky over the differentiated, well-scaled and proportioned. The devices, the subsidiary and partial aspects gradually rose to such heights that you had to climb high up to see beyond them the distinct outlines of what they had overgrown and put into the shadowy background.

★

HOWEVER, it would be totally unrealistic to construe an either-or alternative here, an attitude taken by only a few extremists of the liturgical movement, but one taken by the majority of its opponents who, while bearing down on anything that even faintly savors of the inspiration of the Patristic tradition and the early Church, rise in stubborn defense when they are told that they, too, have only a partial picture of the whole. Popular is not the same as plebeian and vulgar. Popular piety and devotion are good things as long as they have a rising and elevating tendency in their quality. Watered-down and emptied-out mysticism, originally genuine emotion and true sentiment, becomes cheap emotionalism. Liturgy deteriorated into ritualism and performance may parade as popular devotion, while it is really a debased version of a greater thing. As stepping stones, popular or, rather, current practices have their place as much as the liturgy, which is a higher form of worship because it is not only more God-centered, but either itself a sacrament instituted by the Lord and containing Him, or an unfolding of such sacraments, as Lent unfolds the total content of Baptism and the Eucharist.

Sacraments and their organic, essential developments, called the liturgy, are means to an end: to worship and attain the infinite God. Popular devotions, often deriving from the liturgy or its coarser imitation, but more often less sublime results of man's groping and striving, are also stepping stones. In our celebration of Lent, above all other seasons the greatest and richest of the Church's spiritual year, these Masses, these texts of the breviary, are the most important, whatever our parish churches may offer.

The daily station Mass, with its constant and changing wealth of God's Word, is more important than the customary devotions, though we should never neglect them in the name of the liturgy. It would be the kiss of death for the liturgical movement if we formed esoteric conventicles of the elect and the highbrow, disrupting the parish, in the name of the Church "nonexistent." *Mediator Dei* has been called the encyclical that establishes equilibrium in the Mystical Body and, while it rebukes the imprudent, it severely scolds also those who are lethargic, ignorant and stubborn. The more lay people who use the books of the Church, not mechanically thumbing through them, but as guide and inspiration in their approach to God through His Mediator, and the more intelligently they do so, the earlier the existing gaps between altar and nave, clergy and laity, popular devotion and sacred liturgy, subjective emotionalism and God's revelation, will be closed.

The practical difficulty of finding a church where the Mass "of the day," the actual Lenten Mass will be said, can be solved by requesting the Mass of the day when the offering is made. If groups of people get together, in parish after parish, to take turns, there will soon be hardly a parish which does not avail itself of this great privilege expressly granted by the saintly Pope Pius X for this purpose. Not only Rome, but Venice, Milan, Paris, Linz and, if I am not mistaken, Vienna have already revived the "station" Masses, certainly something that ought to be popular in this year of pilgrimage.

One church, or chapel, is officially appointed every day in Lent to represent the "station" in Rome. The bishop and clergy gather at this church and thousands of the laity come to it to "make" their station every day. In France, Germany and Austria, where evening Masses are the commonest thing by now, this is especially easy to do. There is no reason in the world why Catholics in our great cities cannot, privately or in groups, do the same. The psychology which goes with a Holy Year proves that the Church knows that drabness, monotony and restriction to mere mental prayer are mistakes, creating, as they do, a reaction of blind emotionalism, since they split the living man in two. The full and healthy man cries for color, signs and symbols as he cried for the living Word made flesh in Jesus, not a written decree of release delivered by an Archangel to Annas or Caiphas.

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Malaise: the Word for France

Talk without action—an inability to bring ideas to realization

Lily Doblhoff

"MALAISE" is one of those words that cannot successfully be translated. Such terms as "worry" or "anxiety" do not adequately express it. Spiritually it seems to mean more, technically perhaps less, than either of these. Its effect on the mind is greater than any of the suggested English synonyms precisely because it has to do with imponderables. Its head cannot be cut off as was done to the legendary Hydra. Perhaps only with great patience can its heavy gray cloud be lifted from the present mental atmosphere of France.

The latest political developments fail to yield a satisfactory reason for this disturbing feeling. The strikes, for instance, which the Communist-led CGT unions instigated, found little or no response from the French workers and have subsided. Most workers have less and less patience with these spectacular demonstrations which cause them to lose their pay and at the same time result in far less for them than direct negotiations with their employers. Their logical grasp of the situation has blocked the "decisive strike days" which the Communist organ, *L'Humanité,* called for. One solid factor for stability is, therefore, this attitude of the French working class.

A second reason for confidence is the staunch attitude of the Bidault government. In a recent speech the French Premier forcefully stated that "the sole way to be followed by everyone is law, the sole duty: justice." M. Bidault added that his government would not leave its post at a moment which is as uncertain as the present one—even if from a demagogic point of view resigning might appear "advisable" or even appropriate.

If the workers turn a deaf ear to the siren appeals of the extremists, and the government is defending law, order and the internal equilibrium of the country, how account for the pervading uneasiness in France? For this "malaise" radiates to every corner of public and even private life.

One of the main reasons for the oppressive feeling in France is the disparity between the desire of the government for universal respect of law and order and the fact that this desire is carried out only to a very limited extent. A wide gap exists between the will to work constructively and the actual course of both political and everyday life. There is a longing for tranquility and constructive equilibrium in the midst of the most heatedly controversial events. The will to uphold law goes hand-in-hand with widespread disregard of legality. In short, there is a tragic inability to crystallize into actual accomplishment the healthy spirit characteristic of both people and government alike. A lack of strength, an absence of capacity to bring healthy and stimulating ideas to realization is at the heart of this skeptical and dangerous French uneasiness.

While the CGT-led strikes have had no mass following, there are headlines like this in the papers every day: "Strikes in the metal industry expected to spread"; "Possible strike on the subway tomorrow"; "Renault workers willing to quit." Moreover, French trains grind to a stop every so often for two or three hours and buses fail to start off as scheduled. The individual citizen leaves home in the morning without knowing whether he will get to his office or shop on time. And when he returns in the evening he is uncertain whether there will be gas for his kitchen or whether the lights will go on in his flat.

Let us turn again to the government question. During the last few weeks the Bidault regime has taken energetic measures and empowered the prefects of the *départements* to use arms to prevent sabotage. Some shipments of munitions to Indo-China have been loaded under the protection of armed guards and some vessels have been able to set sail. But what is most disheartening is that the departure of a transport is so loudly hailed as a "success," if not a victory of reason, in present-day France.

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TO BALANCE all this there are a few things which provide grounds for a certain moral confidence. One was the profound disgust which the affair of the Generals aroused everywhere. But it must be said that that scandal itself is a sad indication how the impossible becomes pos-

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sible in an atmosphere of public confusion. It is the violence of the reaction to this affair which demonstrates that the French moral sense about public life has not been extinguished.

The affair itself has made no real progress toward being clarified and it is doubtful if it ever will despite the continuing testimony of leading statesmen. In fact it seems to be getting more muddled every day. The question at the beginning was: who is this mysterious Roger Peyré? Now everyone wonders who is behind M. Peyré.

A stenographic report of the court preceedings makes it clear why M. Bidault said after the first parliamentary debate on the scandal, "A sad day!" Imagine one of the highest ranking officers in the French army, General Revers, being in the closest official and private contact with a man who is at least a double agent if not a triple one. Is it not incredible that the General should answer without a moment's hesitation, "Certainly," when he was asked: "So Roger Peyré was more powerful than you?" And how could this M. Peyré manage to escape from France "in time" and what are we to think when M. Queuille, who was Prime Minister at the time, had to admit in his testimony: "I think he could not have escaped without some extensive help."

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ORDINARILY the "affair", as they refer to it in Paris, would not have such great importance, for there have always been big political, military and financial scandals—in many countries. The trouble is that the Communists exploit it to unsettle the nation's morale, while simultaneously stirring up unrest among the workers by other means. Their object is to cause unrest in the minds of the citizens, in the political sphere and in the French economy. While the affair of the Generals is expected to be disturbing to French minds, unexpected slowdowns are supposed to upset the even tenor of everyday life. Communists are expected to utilize whatever posts they hold to spread this feeling of uneasiness. M. Kriegel-Valrimont, the Communist member of the Investigating Commission, succeeded in carrying out an operation of this sort when he enabled the Communist daily, *L'Humanité,* to publish certain documents and letters about the Generals a day ahead of the other papers. Besides unsettling public opinion his object was to pretend that only the Communists were eager to expose the whole business while other political parties and other journals wanted some things to be concealed.

Certain counter-measures have been taken, of course. M. Edmond Michelet, who is one of the most highly esteemed men in French public life, is a case in point. He is a man whose moral and physical courage under Nazi occupation, and whose fortitude in the concentration camp to which he had been deported when he was Minister of Defense, are beyond question. In this instance he made a dramatic appeal to his colleagues on the Investigation Commission; he expressed his violent disapproval of what the Communist delegate, M. Kriegel-Valrimont, had done and succeeded in having things changed. From now on all letters sent to the Commission are to be opened only by the person to whom they are addressed.

Despite the reflections of confidence in the Paris stock exchange and the rise in gold value of the franc—and even the imposition, if not the collection, of heavy luxury taxes for the purpose of emphasizing social justice—too many of the constructive steps which have been taken have been resorted to *post factum.* The initiative is all with those who are seeking to kindle unrest. This means loss of time, loss of public confidence and loss of energy; it is so much more ineffectual to limp along in reaction to more dynamic and more controversial moves.

Those who concern themselves deeply with the fate of France are coming more and more to this conviction: the government, all responsible quarters and everyone concerned must be willing and able to awaken respect for authority; sentiments of good will and sound planning must be followed up by actions. Only if the illusion that problems can be solved by eloquent speeches and planning on paper is recognized for what it is can the unhealthy French "malaise" be overcome.

*

FOR centuries in France public opinion has found expression in events in the theater. Perhaps it is therefore symptomatic that the present sensation of the Paris stage is to some extent also linked to this atmosphere of uneasiness and depression. I refer to the rendering of Molière's "Tartuffe" by the well known and popular French actor, Louis Jouvet. This play has been since the day of its first performance at the court of Louis XIV in 1664 the subject of great controversy. It has been exploited by "anti-clericals" and others as well. "Tartuffe" is a literary work which is so widely taught and discussed in every French school that every word and phrase of it is familiar to Frenchmen.

Now this role has been brought to life again by M. Jouvet with an entirely new interpretation. His Tartuffe is simply a hypocritical flatterer; there is nothing of the truculent lover of life whom Molière saw in the ogling piousness of his villain. The stage settings of the well known M. Bracque add to the transformation by failing to convey the environment of a wealthy gentle-

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man in the days of Louis XIV. There is nothing of the desire for worldly pleasures in the figure Jouvet portrays on the stage; his Tartuffe seems to be a pallid personification of "malaise" without the elation which expectation of hidden pleasures of the flesh or of mammon would bring.

As one witty critic said: "The Tartuffe of Jouvet is thoroughly tired of all the previous Tartuffes that have existed before him." I think that the general "malaise" is a similar phenomenon. The French people are tired of everything that has happened up to now, for that has been words, words and more words without the hope of deeds or of authority backing up those words, without the foundation of a real, firm, logical ground—the ground of French clarity and reason.

The Labor Movement

The Case of the Flying Stanchion

JOE CURRAN was just a big raw sailor when he took over the chair at the first convention of the National Maritime Union, CIO, back in 1937. Those of us who watched him then were impressed because he did so well. Of course every now and then Joe had to whisper with one of the smart Communists behind him on the platform — somebody like Blackie Myers, Tommy Ray or Jack Lawrenson. He was not far from the days when as a bosun on the S.S. California he had led the sit-down strike that set off the revolt that sank the old and corrupt International Seamen's Union, AFL.

Joe had a native intelligence and wit and he did all right. In due course the delegates laid the keel of the NMU, a handsome vessel with a coat of fresh red paint below the waterline.

We watched him again eleven years later at the convention of 1948, one of the longest, loudest and most embattled conventions in the history of American labor. The man was poised, articulate in a positively literate way, at home in the intricacies of parliamentary law, master of the situation at all times. It was a good thing too. The Curran of 1937 would have lost control of that turbulent hall a dozen times, with all his native intelligence and wit.

Curran won out at that convention, just barely. And his Rank-and-File slate won the subsequent election and the Stalinists walked the plank. Myers, Smith, McKenzie, Stack and a number of others were tried and their books lifted. But Joe could never have swung it without the ex-Communists: Ray, Stone, Keith and that fascinating character, the intellectual, charming and slightly sinister-looking seafarer whom they call "Old Silver Tongue," Jack Lawrenson. In fact, Curran himself was a good bit of a Red at one time. They never owned him completely, but he toed the line for a good many years. And Harry Bridges had something when he boasted in an unguarded moment of his current trial, "We made Curran what he is today."

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NOW the ex-Commies have taken to fighting among themselves. It is the old story. But it has a few new twists. Recently Curran's group suspended the New York port agent and 14 patrolmen. Then they tried to have Lawrenson ousted from his job as vice-president. The membership upheld Lawrenson at a New York meeting, 902 to 829. A few weeks later a group of Curranites raided a Lawrenson meeting in Tom Mooney Hall. They announced their arrival by hurling a traffic stanchion through the door and in the ensuing exchange of incivilities, tire irons, knives, clubs, bricks and other weapons were employed so effectively that four seamen wound up in the hospital.

Since January Lawrenson has been working with his old enemies, the Stalinists, who at one point were reduced to despair but are now whistling again for the first time in several years. There has now emerged a third group called the Committee for Democratic Unionism headed by an idealist named Ernest Nukanen. He is trying to steer a middle course, refusing to form a united front with the Stalinists and still opposing the Curranite trend toward dictatorship and the use of terror. Nukanen has a good program and he has my sympathy, but he has a tendency to make extreme statements that will only weaken his cause. For example, in advocating the use of secret ballot on all important issues at union meetings he says, "Only in dictatorships are open ballots cast on important issues." That would be news to the U. S. Congress. Or this: "The opposition to the (Curranite) officials . . . has been dealt with so ruthlessly that it would be difficult to find a parallel to these actions in American trade union history."

Nukanen just doesn't know American trade union history if he believes that statement. You don't have to go back further than yesterday to find unions—Commie unions, AFL racketeer unions, John L. Lewis unions—where Curran's tactics would be considered moderate and where the idea of the boss man being repudiated at a membership meeting, as Curran was, is just unheard of.

But Nukanen is on the right track. And there is nothing moderate about flying stanchions, knives and tire irons. I remember an incident at the 1948 convention. The Stalinists were hogging the floor on some issue and delaying the game. Charlie Keith got up and moved to close discussion. A motion to close discussion takes a two-thirds vote and is in order almost any time. But Curran ruled it out of order. He was leaning over backward to be democratic and allow his opposition every opportunity to talk themselves out.

Joe Curran is leaning over backwards no longer. He is falling on his face and unless he catches himself soon he is going to lose a lot of the respect that he has won from his brothers in the labor movement over the years, even though he may gain the whole NMU.

JOHN C. CORT.

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Communications

The Catholic Press

Portland, Oregon

TO THE Editors: Father Neil O'Connor's letter [COMMONWEAL, Feb. 24], re Donald McDonald's article, "The State of the Local Catholic Press" [Feb. 3"], demands notice from those of us lay Catholics who are "tools for big unions and their materialistic ends"—and proud to be so.

At the present time, here in the Northwest, the American Federation of Labor's Lumber & Sawmill Workers Union, of which I am an editorial agent, is engaged in a struggle to obtain employer-paid pensions of $100 per month.

Some 65,000 of our members are directly concerned about them, and emphasis on the problem generally in the Father O'Connor type of Catholic weekly would go far toward making the task of obtaining them (the proper kind) more certain. Of course, this proposed pension is materialistic, but so far, that factor has not been raised by either management or labor in negotiations. There has always been self-evident agreement on that point.

Judging from the tone of Father O'Connor's letter, I, no doubt, am wasting my lay whisper, here, as far as he is concerned (and it seems ridiculously trite to point this out), but this pension is *an actual problem.*

In conclusion, just let me say I am not a "smart" young (lay) man, but I will risk the epithet being hurled this way when I say that right away, quickly, the Catholic Press should deal much more with "matters like wages, housing, pension plans, health insurance and recreation facilities".

And, here is where I still have hope for the Catholic Press of the United States. Father O'Connor, himself, terms these "positive" suggestions. . . .

THOMAS L. SCANLON.
Asst. Managing Editor
The Union Register

Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE Editors: After reading Father O'Connor's letter . . . I had the feeling of watching a man twist, turn and otherwise run 90 yards only to score for the opposition.

If any doubts existed as to the validity of Mr. McDonald's article, Father O'Connor has stepped forward to present himself as Exhibit A. His narrow, clerical attitude to a bit of constructive criticism, and his disdain for "young college graduates" sounds even a greater warning than does the article presented by Donald McDonald.

If the editors Father O'Connor considers himself representing do not seriously consider some of the points discussed in the COMMONWEAL article and make some serious efforts before the next Catholic Press conference then I too shall be looking forward to next February's COMMONWEAL, but will not share the amusement that is Father's. THOMAS A. CLEMENTE.

New Orleans, La.

TO THE Editors: I had intended to write "Amen" to Donald McDonald's article. . . . Father Neil O'Connor's letter concerning it has sounded a louder and more telling "Amen" than ever I could. . . . More power, therefore, to Mr. McDonald for his "annual blast" which I suspect did more jolting than Father O'Connor confesses to. EVELYN BANBURY.

Summit, New Jersey

TO THE Editors: I was very pleased to see COMMONWEAL follow Donald McDonald's article . . . with another article on the same subject. Of course, I am referring to Donald Attwater's fine article in the February 24th issue.

Actually this letter was inspired more by Father O'Connor's criticism of Mr. McDonald's article. I used to be a loyal reader of the diocesan press, picking up as many as three different papers every Sunday. At that time I was trying to find some interesting Catholic news items to read. Yes, trying is the right word, for the important items were generally hidden in such inconspicuous places that I had difficulty finding them.

I thirsted for knowledge. I was one of those Catholics who wanted to know his religion and his church better. So I looked! The liturgy, what was that? Who ever heard of philosophy or theology? Those words were never used in a diocesan newspaper except in such instances as when it was intended that the "magic" attached to them would leave the reader so spellbound that he was led to conclude it must be so because the editor said it. They were intended to block rather than to enhance thinking on the part of the reader.

But we have great philosophers and theologians. Why does the press not use the tools they have given us? Would it not be a better thing to simplify these complex sciences and expose the average layman to them? Or must he forego any hope of ever knowing the whys and hows, leaving the field to the intelligentsia alone. How much longer will the average man have to go on taking everything on faith and reading discourses that appeal only to his emotions? . . . LEOPOLDO B. VALDES.

Los Angeles, California

TO THE Editors: As a reader of Catholic papers, I have felt for some time that something should be said on "The Status of the Local Catholic Press" and on "The Scope of a Catholic Paper." Therefore, I wish to express my very sincere appreciation for the publica-

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tion of the excellent articles by Donald McDonald and Donald Attwater. . . .

My prayer for the Catholic press and its great mission has found words to give expression to my thoughts and desires, in this statement by Donald Attwater: "A most important apostolic activity of the Catholic press is to give to us, its readers, example of honesty, fearlessness, integrity of mind, sobriety of judgment and presentation, courtesy and charity of spirit." . . .

MARY J. WORKMAN.

New Orleans and the Racial Problem

New Orleans, Louisiana

TO THE Editors: As I read your comments under the heading "The Demagogue in the Vieux Carré" [THE COMMONWEAL, Feb. 3] (a nice catch-phrase but far too limiting when referring to modern New Orleans) I began to feel that you had actually caught the spirit that, since the departure of the Carpet Baggers nearly a century ago, has dominated this New World city of Old World culture. However, it would seem that some of the conclusions you drew, toward the end of your editorial, were a bit premature and were not borne out by facts.

During the fifty years of my life in New Orleans I have come more and more to appreciate the prevailing spirit of respect (not tolerance) of citizens, one for another. This has been observed in various positions in work dealing with large segments of the public and the latest proof of our wholesome attitude was the very election which you discussed in your editorial.

By no means do I claim that we are 100% pure or 99 44/100% without defect. A world devoid of prejudice would be a world free from sin. Nor do I claim that the modicum of prejudice that floats to the surface is all that exists in the hearts of our citizens. In New Orleans we have learned, out of respect for each other, to refrain from unkind racial criticism and only occasionally does a Cobb come ranting across the scene; and then he is a voice crying out in a wilderness of true "amazement."

Perhaps, from the more or less comfortable arm chair of the editorial room, it seems easy to philosophize about this thing called segregation; to point up its horrors and to point out its cures. Until you have lived with a problem that has spread its roots for over a century, you cannot appreciate the difficulties entailed. I think that the South, as a whole, has made much progress in the past twenty-five years. I think that New Orleans, in particular, has made notable progress. . . .

But there are some yet alive who actually remember a Carpet Bagger. There are exhibits in our museums of newspapers and posters that flouted pictures of an all-Negro government in the faces of our people. There are the first and second descendants of men and women who suffered great loss and indignity in the defeat of the Confederacy. There were deep wounds that left scars and deep blots that have not been erased with the years. No easier is this cure than that of the mind of the Irish Catholic who remembers the dark days of persecution; the Jew who fled at sabre point; the DP who left his home never again to return. Bitterness leaves its taste for years and generations and centuries.

And what do I detect in your bringing forth the facts about the Alabama Dixiecrat who was carrying on "with heat about the Negroes in Harlem and the slums of other Northern and Eastern cities." . . . surely you do not find the Harlems and the South Sides beyond criticism; nor do you believe that segregation is solely a problem of the South. The chief difference, it seems to me, is the manner of enforcement; whether it be by law or the power of the stink-bomb. To me, as a Catholic, and as we face the magnitude of a mountain that seems to defy movement, it is sometimes good to have a haven of rationalization to which I can run, saying "It's the LAW and what can we do about it?" And I feel sorry for those Christians who must shut their eyes to the illegal segregation that exists elsewhere.

But legal or illegal, Southern or Northern, Negro, Mexican or Oriental, segregation is not part of the Christian pattern. To those of us who are close to it, who must, for example, live with 190,000 Negroes in New Orleans and face needs that have so long been neglected, it is truly a mountainous problem. . . .

And now, back to the election of January 1950. The results speak for themselves and damn the argument that must be drawn from the exception of a Cobb rather than from the general population of a community. When the tallies were counted on the night of January 10th, Alvin Cobb had drawn less than five thousand votes out of a total of 184,000. . . .

JOHN A. ZIMMERMAN.

An Appeal

Louvain, Belgium

TO THE Editors: We are sure you know the tragic situation in which many countries of Asia stand at the present time. Because of political circumstances and social upheavals, many intellectual centers in these lands have not yet had the opportunity of renewing contact with the rest of the intellectual world since 1940.

At this time, when they need all possible aid, the intellectual and scientific leaders of these Far Eastern countries lack books and reviews, so vital in any civilized country.

We suggest that you appeal through your columns to your readers, asking them, if they can spare copies of your magazine, to forward them to us so that we can send them on to the addresses that we have.

Your review, by the problems it studies, by its spirit, can be very useful. We trust you will understand the urgency of this appeal.

E. CORIN.
R.I.D.A. Service.
Société des Auxiliares des Missions
37, Boulevard De Tirlemont
Louvain, Belgium

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The Screen

Enchantment

SOMETIMES it's fun to be fooled; and I'm sure if you're in the right mood you'll find the new Disney picture as enchanting as anything you've seen on stage or screen. The story of *"Cinderella"* is a natural for children and romantic stenographers, and Walt Disney has wisely omitted any of the horrors he usually puts into his longer films. Of course there are the wicked stepmother and her oafish daughters and that evil cat Lucifer, but their villainy adds more to the excitement of the piece than to the terror. Furthermore Disney, with his eye also on adult audiences, devotes plenty of footage to the mice and birds who are Cinderella's friends; and it is these cute creatures who will win you completely to the film. Disney and his animators must realize by now the limitations of their cartoon people as people. No matter how sweet and charming Cinderella and the Prince are, they are still rather stiff cartoon figures, so this time the artists tell the parts of the plot about them as quickly as possible, and there are surprises and imagery to hold our interest.

But when the mice swing into action, especially Gus-Gus, that fat, genial, not-too-bright little fellow, and Jaq, the leader of the gang who knows most of the answers, the picture is pure magic. I suspect that Gus-Gus will rank with Dopey, Jiminy Cricket and Dumbo as great Disney creations. A good word must also be said for the Fairy Godmother in this fine cast, for she is another example of Disney's inimitable sense of humor: instead of being the sweet lovely fairy that Billie Burke was in "The Wizard of Oz," she's a warm, comfortable matron who could be anybody's mother, except for the fact that she's always forgetting where she misplaced her wand and what the words are in the magic formula. But I shouldn't tell you any more of Disney's surprises.

Or, if you like your fantasy a little more realistic, there's a perfectly delightful army film (if anything about the army can be associated with delight) called *"Francis."* Maybe it's so much fun because it kids the formidable army so effectively. Its plot, based on a novel by David Stern who also wrote the screenplay, is mainly about a young second lieutenant who becomes friendly during the Burma campaign with an army mule *who talks.* Now really! Francis, which is the mule's name, helps his rather inept friend become a hero—much to the consternation of the commanding officer (Ray Collons), the psychiatrist (Eduard Franz) and various other officers and men who just refuse to accept a talking mule. Nobody will believe our hero's story—not even a three-star general. I won't tell how all this works out, but Arthur Lubin has directed it so well in such a matter-of-fact way that it's fun from beginning to end. Donald O'Connor is perfectly cast as the hero suspected of being a psycho.

In its even more realistically implausible way *"When Willie Comes Marching Home"* is cinema fantasy too. In a straight, take-it-or-leave-it manner, Director John Ford tells this story about a boy who was the first in his town to enlist. After the first flush of glamor is over, it becomes a sad story, because the boy is stationed in a camp right outside of his town, and as time goes on the boy's family and girl and neighbors think he's a goldbrick. He just stays and stays. And then suddenly, after several years during which the boy is ashamed and frustrated, he is whisked abroad on a special mission, gets involved with the French Underground, gets whisked to London and then Washington and back to camp before his friends and relatives realize he has gone. Actually all this is very funny and with nice, honest, likable Dan Dailey in the lead role, it becomes a homey kind of satire that ranks with "Merton of the Movies" or "Seventeen."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Stage

The Bird Cage

IF only Arthur Laurents' current melodrama could have been purposely funny, rather than merely mistaken, it seems to me it would have been lickitysplit. There is so much going on. A man visibly—physically and mentally—brutalizes his wife; he corrupts and cheats his employees; he seduces; he acts as procurer for his own seventeen-year-old son; he forces his partner into the murder of a crippled baby; he smashes a pianist's hands by banging the piano lid down on them; and he ends up by setting a real fire on the stage, *a real fire.* This is something I have never seen before, although perhaps my grandmother did. Oh, and I forgot to mention, there is also a gun.

I think the reason one does not sit roaring at this exhibition is that Mr. Laurents' theme is so patently honest. He has wished to present a character with a power complex of enormous size. In exposition, he has given this character a bad father, naturally. He has set him in a nightclub milieu which is, astonishingly, not large, not bigtime, not successful, and above all, not interesting. In short, while he has delivered his man every known (and novel) theatrical trick, he has not granted him intelligence. If he were dealing with a hero, this would be, of course, understandable; but as he is openly trying to present a villain, the business is a shambles.

A number of good actors are working intrepidly on the author's behalf. Melvyn Douglas's attributes need no emphasis from me, although I suggest he often allows himself to be miscast. But the work of Eleanor Lynn, Jean Carson, and young Wright King is vital, and useful to watch; and Boris Aronson's multiple setting is in line. *(at the Coronet)*

KAPPO PHELAN.

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There Remained These Three

John Cogley

IT IS NO LONGER a physics-laboratory secret that most of us on the earth today may be doomed to die violently. Almost every week groups of solemn scientists, like guilty prophets, warn us that it is now merely a matter of pressing the right buttons. Meanwhile, politics all over the world is becoming more and more like a game of Russian roulette. And the politicians themselves seem to be helpless, unable to quit the game, to go home and sleep it off.

"Mankind is about to destroy itself. . . . Mankind is getting ready to commit suicide," we hear it from all sides. Already too often. It hits the ear like a worried mother's too-constant cautions. It has become meaningless. Still if there were really such a thing as mankind, the monotonous warning itself might be enough. But mankind is an abstraction, a logical universal, with neither wit or will. There is no mankind, there are only men. And there is the rub. Even though the end does come with a bang, each man has to die alone, with his own single, separate, distinct whimper.

The exaltation of the abstraction—the race, the culture, the nation, the class—has been basic to every one of the totalitarians, of course. It has been used to justify murder, mayhem, mass slaughter and group persecution again and again through this long dark night. But though the exaltation may be of an abstraction, an idea without flesh or blood or keen nerve ends, the murder and the mayhem are concerned with individual persons, taken one by one: real living flesh, real living blood. Each of the six million European Jews died separately. Six million separate hearts stopped beating; six million bodies, each at its given moment, began to rot.

A man who would write modern history is compelled to write of individual men and women. Anything less would be contemptuous of human suffering. In *Hiroshima,* John Hersey proved that he was one of the great living reporters. *A Bell for Adano* was his first attempt in the role of novelist-historian. Now he has used his magnificent talents to tell the story of the Warsaw Jews, who were among the most numerous and helpless victims of Hitler's mania.

The wall of his title (*The Wall. John Hersey. Knopf.* $4.00) is literally the thick concrete barrier the Nazis ordered to be built—ironically, by the Jews themselves—to cut off the Warsaw ghetto from the ordinary life of the city. Symbolically, it is the protective psychological wall the Jews of Eastern Europe built around themselves and their ancient ghetto culture. This is the wall between Jews and Gentiles found everywhere to a greater or less extent. It is a wall that survives in the U. S. though not on the same hopeless dimension. It is the kind of wall American Negroes know and, yes, Catholics too, no matter how great our St. Patrick day parades down Fifth Avenue.

In the Jewish society Hersey writes of, this barrier was a highly accepted thing before the war. Eventually, under the pressure of terrible events from the outside, the psychological Jewish wall collapsed. But while that was happening, three million Polish Jews were systematically, maliciously murdered by the forces of a nation with an old, temporarily abandoned Christian tradition, a nation moved to fanaticism by the abstract idea of *Herrenvolk.* Elsewhere in Europe, another three million were destroyed. Six million Jews in all—among them converts to Christianity and even a few suicidal anti-Semites—coolly exterminated, like lice, for no other reason than that they were what God had made them—Jews.

Amazingly, the moral indignation of their Christian brothers throughout the world was only moderate. European Christians, of course, were threatened by the same savage forces and, in the presence of so much violence, it is understandable if their sensibilities were somewhat blunted. But in untouched America, among Catholics as a body, the moral outrage against the Jewish slaughter was less than that known to have been expressed against a single obscene novel.

John Hersey seems to say that the Poles too were largely indifferent to the crime in Warsaw. Perhaps he overstates the case. But I know that during these same years, in uniform and not, and in ten different states, I heard not a single reference to these monstrous murders from the pulpit and read very little about them in the general Catholic press. In those same years, organized anti-Semitism, masking itself as a "Christian" movement, flourished in New York and elsewhere for a while, and there was little or no let-up in the home-grown Hitlerism that shrinks from violence but timidly confines itself to ugly stories, vicious rumors and the casual slighting remark.

★

THE WALL is a long, leisurely book, written in the form of a diary-like document which is supposed to have been kept by one Noach Levinson. Levinson is a retiring, introspective, fastidious Polish-Jewish scholar who applies himself feverishly to the job of recorder-on-the-spot historian. The 632 pages of the novel are supposed to have been chosen from a hidden mass of material found after the war in 17 iron boxes and several parcels of Levinson's journal. From what he has given us, John Hersey makes it clear that Levinson's records would logically add up at least to that much. Noach regularly records his own impressions and experiences, his conversations with others, verbatim, reports of conversations he hears about, and even reports of reports.

Hersey uses this device to give the flavor of fact to his fiction, but it gives the book a certain forbidding heaviness too, like the first impression of a Victorian classic. Getting into it is somewhat discouraging. But the final effect is powerful, and it is probably due to this great massing of details: Noach Levinson's slow, studious,

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conscientious method of weighing and sorting facts and rumors, his dogged devotion to putting the pieces together and to finding the inevitable patterns.

Noach Levinson is a wonderful invention. He is sometimes maddening, like all pedants, sometimes very winning, but always thoroughly human. All we know of him is from his own pen, yet he comes through in clear focus, the old Noach and the new, for the ghetto events change this self-sufficient bookworm, too.

Dozens of characters roam through Levinson's verbose pages. Sometimes the impressions of them flicker and flutter like bad television, but several are not easily forgotten. The plain girl, Rachel Apt, who had painfully learned to live with her own face and so grew in confidence until she became the acknowledged leader, "the little mother" of the quixotic Jewish resistance, dominates the book, next to Noach himself. Both of them belong with the commanding creations of modern fiction. Rachel's cowardly, compromising father, who went to surgical extremes to disguise his Jewishness; Wladislaw Jablonski, the boy who was brought up as a Pole and a Catholic and had to learn abruptly to live as a Jew like his fathers before him; Schplunt, the clown of the ghetto, who amuses the heavy Germans with absurd antics while the others marvel at the method in his madness; even tiny Israel, the baby who cries too often and too long and, in a terrible scene, is silenced forever by a dutiful partisan—there are Jews and Jews in this ghetto, each of them meeting the Nazi *dies irae* differently.

But seen through Levinson's eyes, slowly they add up to a "family" and bear the awesome burden of community, first with something like indifference, when they are too human to believe the Germans are really serious about the threatened genocide, then as the horrors increase, with a fumbling sense of loyalty to each other. Finally, the pitifully small number left have reached a full sense of purpose and belief in their own dignity as men—a belief really hard to come by, as the totalitarians have viciously proved. In time they accept the harsh obligations of that dignity. They see their duty in terms of a doomed but meaningful armed resistance.

In the final scene, the few remaining, Noach and Rachel among them, meet the Jewish partisans active in the Lomianski Forest. Here, says Noach, are Jews "tan and almost unbearably strong and hearty." For them as for him and Rachel and others, the ghetto wall no longer protects or imprisons. It has come crashing down, along with so many things of the past.

*

THERE are two ways of looking at the wall between Jews and Gentiles," one of John Hersey's characters says, "from the inside and the outside: there is much to be said on both sides." Hersey, a non-Jew, chose to write from the inside. That he succeeded is more than a literary triumph, as this book undoubtedly is, it is a personal triumph, too. Hersey has presented a world not his own, and he has made it a very real, believable world, permeated with the ancient faith and the abiding, conscious Jewish awareness of the presence of

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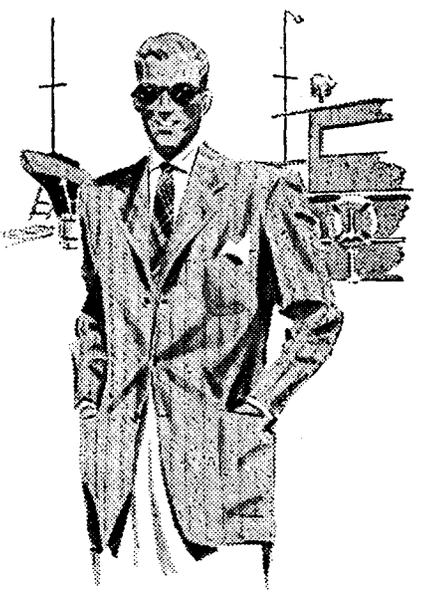

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God. The Jews in *The Wall* are devout, full of patriarchal reverence and piety. If you consider, for instance, Mr. Blanshard's studious and disastrous attempts to catch the spirit of Catholicism from the outside, you will realize how brilliantly Hersey transmits the atmosphere, the moving spirit, not merely the documentation, of a culture and a religious faith not his own.

The Wall is not without fault, but here surely is a case where charity can cover a multitude of sins. And *The Wall* abounds in charity while its literary shortcomings are minor. By succeeding brilliantly, even if not absolutely, at the technical level, John Hersey has shown conclusively that he is a first-rate novelist, a craftsman. And the reverence for human personality, the mark of genuine feeling and compassion on almost every page are themselves an unwitting tribute to a first-rate human being—the author. Here is a novel that arouses faith in faith itself, hope in hope and a real love for charity. That is the highest tribute I can pay it.

Books

The Coming Defeat of Communism. James Burnham. Day. $3.50.

JAMES BURNHAM'S new book is an excellent primer for the fight against world Communism and the Soviet Union. It describes in sharply formulated sentences a variety of methods which ought to be applied in the struggle. Burnham points out correctly that the cold war is not absolutely distinct from an open war, for not only can the present situation lead at any moment to an outbreak of general military action, but it must be recognized that bloody encounters are happening daily in many parts of the world. The fact that millions of people are kept in concentration camps and deported from their homes by the Soviet leaders is but one example.

Burnham emphasizes—and this is a great merit of his book—that refugees and victims of Soviet politics, as well as the former Communists who have turned into bitter enemies of everything connected with the USSR, must be utilized in the present struggle with the empire of Stalin. He is not satisfied with a purely defensive attitude, with a policy of containment. He declares that our aim must not be merely stopping Communist advances, but the destruction of the Communist center of power, that is the USSR.

Does he believe that the tensions prevailing today must necessarily become open war? Apparently not— for he proposes also a "deal," an arrangement, which should be offered those Communists who might be willing to turn against the expansionist policies of the Politbureau. Of course it is most unlikely that this deal would be accepted, for conditions include the ending of Communist fifth columns and propaganda (this might be accepted, for after all Moscow has often promised to abstain from

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revolutionary propaganda); and retreat to the 1939 Soviet borders (this is unacceptable to the rulers of the USSR, although they might prove willing if they could cover up such a retreat with conditions which would transform it into a farce, as in the Soviet retreat from Northern Korea). But such a farce is excluded by Burnham's next condition: free selection of governments in all evacuated territories. The last condition demands in return for American economic aid, a modification of the internal structure of the Soviet regime in order to guard the world against "secret and irresponsible militarization." Obviously Burnham's "deal" cannot be regarded as a program of appeasement, but is a demand for capitulation. Burnham is inclined to believe that the Soviets do not want to risk open war even if they are pressed. He shares the opinion of those who assumed that the sending of armed transports through the Russian zone at the beginning of the Berlin Blockade would not have resulted in war, but in a Russian acquiescence.

THERE are in the book many specific interesting recommendations. He advises, for example, close American cooperation not only with governments and official agencies, but with such groups as trade unions and cultural associations in the countries opposing Communist aggression. He hopes that a university for refugees from Soviet territories will be founded and supported by the United States in order to have a center for information and for constant penetration into the regions behind the Iron Curtain. He urges the use for the campaign against Communism of Americans residing abroad. He tries to prove that the value of the resistance movement cannot be identified with immediately visible military results.

Much of Burnham's basic program is not original, it is true, but his book succeeds in presenting in comparatively few pages a wealth of material and a definite policy. Despite all his criticism of official American attitudes, Burnham recognizes that much progress has been made since 1945. Communism has been put on the defensive, at least in Europe, though this is not enough: offensives are necessary in order to defeat the enemy. Burnham is —and who would disagree?—optimistic about the chances and strength of the world leader against Communism, the United States. Despite some vacillation, despite the shortcomings and failures of American business men who, on the one hand, apply the label Communism to men and movements that have nothing to do with it, and on the other hand are sometimes inclined to appease Communism economically, and because of their lack of discrimination, even to support it; despite the fact that even now many Americans do not recognize the true character of the cold war, Burnham is sure that the defeat of Communism is coming. It is certain if the United States will remain firm in her purpose and fully utilize her great strength.

THIS book will be widely read, and will help to clarify the thought of many readers. Its basic attitude is right so far as its analysis goes. But does this analysis go deeply enough? Burnham himself remarks that he cannot always avoid oversimplification. He does

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not discuss what sort of world would emerge after the defeat of Communism. He sometimes gives the impression that this defeat would solve all world issues. The strength of the United States will take care of all problems. He skips over the varieties of opinions held by the many refugees from Soviet territories, although he mentions the fact that anti-Soviet Russians want to maintain the Russian Empire, while the Ukrainians are for an independent Ukraine. He pays no attention to the disagreements between France and Germany. He assumes too simply that American influence can bring about the unification of Europe, thus underestimating the often hidden aversion towards powerful American influence. He does not go into the reasons which made the mythology of Communism and the USSR attractive to many people, particularly in underdeveloped areas. Not everything can be explained simply by Communist cynicism and the softness and stupidity of non-Communists. He does not take into consideration sufficiently the significance of the ending of the American atomic monopoly—a significance which has been brilliantly emphasized by Professor Hans J. Morgenthau of the University of Chicago in a remarkable article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.* Finally, and this is most serious, Burnham has a too external conception of the present world crisis, of which world Communism is a primitive and barbaric expression. The churches are mentioned only as auxiliaries in the conflict with the despotism of Moscow; there is no understanding of the moral developments and shifts which made the rise of political religions possible. A glance into the *Reflections on World History* of the nineteenth century Swiss sage and historian, Jacob Burckhardt shows how flat and insufficient are both Burnham's thought and his purely mechanistic concept of the fall and rise of elites.

But despite all shortcomings Burnham's book remains a very remarkable and helpful survey of the most important power conflict of our time. Its practical recommendations deserve careful study and evaluation. It must be noted too that this new book avoids more successfully than Burnham's previous works the tendency to draw too much in simple black and white. Oversharp formulations are used, it is true, but they are subsequently toned down. Burnham is now aware that there are other colors besides black and white. WALDEMAR GURIAN.

Louis Pasteur. Free Lance of Science. Rene J. Dubos. Little, Brown. $5.00.

IF WE HAVE the misfortune to be bitten by a rabid dog, we seek the Pasteur Treatment. The daily milk most of us drink is milk that has been Pasteur-ized. The life of Pasteur has within recent years been a film success. We are made aware that Louis Pasteur, experimental scientist, was a great man.

Just how great a man he was, however—and, in detail, *why* he was—there has until now hardly been a book competent to tell us. Pasteur, to put it simply, was an enormous person, a towering person, a very key-person in

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the history of science; and such a giant has to await a biographer extraordinary. In Dr. Dubos there appears exactly the right man—nearly, it would seem, the one possible and indispensable man—to write the story of Pasteur's scientific life.

Dr. Dubos is a Frenchman. He is a scientist full of skills, learnings, and honors. (Harvard; Rochester; Rutgers; the Rockefeller Institute; the George Fabyan Professorship of Comparative Pathology and the Professorship of Tropical Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Tyrothricin? That was a Dubos discovery. Gramicidin? Dubos again. A soil microbe capable of decomposing the capsule of pneumococcus? Dr. Dubos.) The man in all his work and spirit must surely be as **close to the work and spirit of Pasteur** as one human being can well be to another. He should be the man to write *the* study of Pasteur. He has, it seems unmistakable, done so.

THE range of Pasteur's significant discoveries in his seventy-three years was so gigantic as to seem scarcely credible. He studied fermentation, and revolutionized knowledge of it. He studied crystallography, and was a titan in that science. He studied the making of wine and the making of beer, and learned what no vintner or brewer had known before. He investigated rabies, the etiology of anthrax, pleuropneumonia of cattle, erysipelas in swine, the diseases of silkworms . . . the list could scarcely be crowded into one of these COMMONWEAL pages. Louis Pasteur was a dedicated man of the laboratory, and also a furnace of energy, and also a genius in applying the results of his researches to the practical life of everyday. It is in no way a sentimentality to call him a saint of science.

What Dr. Dubos has done is to tell us, as only another great scientist can, the detailed story of all these prodigious experiments: how they came about, how they were conducted, what their relation was to other experiments and discoveries of Pasteur's contemporary scientists, and what their practical influence has been upon scientific knowledge and scientific thinking as a whole. It is a narrative of masterly clearness, cohesion, and continuous interest.

Necessarily, the book is more a biography of Pasteur as scientist than of Pasteur as human being. But the man, as man, is far from neglected. The scientist who could be fiercely sure of himself, even icily arrogant, in argument with his fellow scientists, was also a gentle and devoted family man. That Pasteur is here. The man of intellect was also the man of faith; and that Pasteur is here. Dr. Dubos' final chapter, called "Beyond Experimental Science," is largely a thoughtful exposition of Pasteur's position as anti-materialist and unswervingly Catholic. Pasteur, giant of science, firmly "limited the role of experimental science in biology to the physico-chemical determinism of living processes." "We are lighted," Pasteur insisted, "by reflection from the infinite."

The life of formal science must sometimes seem, to those outside it, a dry, fusty-dusty sort of thing. This

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book will let any such reader see the hot passion and excitement of the scientific life, and better understand the derivation of "enthusiasm" from *"en Theos."* Again, it must sometimes seem to less robust spirits than Pasteur's (and Dubos') that a boiling energy like Pasteur's must be the prerogative of fine health. This book will bring home to such readers the much-forgotten fact that Louis Pasteur had a cerebral hemorrhage, extensively paralyzing him, when he was forty-six. He went on working, and magnificently, for nearly thirty years. Finally, there is everlastingly abroad the fuzzy notion that the scientific spirit must somehow necessarily have an incompatibility with the religious. This was the final scene of the life of Louis Pasteur: "September 28, 1895, in the late afternoon, he died, his body almost entirely paralyzed, one of his hands in that of his wife, the other holding a crucifix."

This book is in every way a splendid work of scientific biography. There is no mush nor melodrama in it, but the soundest of stuffs, soundly presented.

ALAN DEVOE.

An Essay for Our Times. H. Stuart Hughes. Knopf. $2.75.

AT A TIME when much of our political thinking consists of rearranging stock phrases, and words are becoming signals for emotional response rather than tools for analysis, it is easy to sympathize with a search for political perspective. In this intelligent and frequently incisive volume, H. Stuart Hughes attempts to supply such perspective by taking the current international crisis out of a purely political orientation and viewing it against the broad background of Western culture.

Mr. Hughes is an assistant professor of history at Harvard and the grandson of Charles Evans Hughes. He writes with clarity and succinctness, and with a steady recognition of the realities of our time. But although he comes up with some significant insights along the way, his cultural approach does not—perhaps no new approach could—shed any more light on the subject of Russo-American conflict. And the cultural generalization itself, with its inevitable simplifications, raises its own difficulties.

The basic premise of this essay is Toynbeean, but without Toynbee's Christian optimism. Mr. Hughes believes that Western culture, particularly Western European culture, is in a state of decay. The affirmative spirit of hardier days has been replaced by a universal pessimism. Both the individual and the society are torn with conflict. And although the imposition of American hegemony may stabilize the present situation, it can not infuse new life into a dying civilization.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, the author finds young and vigorous. But there is little likelihood of a simple replacement of the old by the new. In adapting Marxism to the needs of an eastern peasantry, Russia has strengthened its appeal to the rising peoples of Asia. But concomitantly the discard of its rational and humanistic aspects has succeeded in repelling the West.

Such a viewpoint breeds little hope for an eventual solution. But as Mr. Hughes suggests, perhaps there is no solution. In carefully couched terms, he maintains that there are vital values in both the Western and Soviet cultures. And although it seems highly unlikely, the most promising prospect for the future may well be simply the prolonged coexistence of both societies.

One of the greatest values of this little essay is its clarification of the attitudes of that generation of Americans born during the First World War to grow up and fight the second. It is a sober and gently pessimistic record. Decline and disintegration are so basically accepted that, unlike the violent manifestoes written after the First World War, it does not bother to flaunt its lostness.

But for those of us who are older and cling to our traditional values, or for those of us too young to remember stability who have imagined an order in the perpetual chaos, the wholesale abandonment of Western culture as a manure for future civilizations appears premature. Weakness and decline assuredly exist in Western Europe, but they are not simply the inevitable cultural results of a complex machine age. The breakdown of the political and economic process — war, depression, internal disturbance, threat of new war—these have been heavy contributors to the widespread uncertainty and loss of faith. Mr. Hughes sees the present East-West crisis as the culmination of the greater cultural crisis; it is equally a generator of that crisis.

But the author's cultural analysis has only tangential relationship to his sound political conclusions. The war is not yet. In the meantime, he counsels, there is room for maneuver and diplomacy, and for an appreciation of the humanistic goals that transcend the competing ideologies of our time. Above all, let us cultivate intellectual honesty and an independence from facile generalizations. Without faith and with very little hope, clear thinking is all that remains.

CAROL H. WEISS.

• REVIEWERS •

WALDEMAR GURIAN is chairman of the Committee on International Relations of the University of Notre Dame and editor of *The Review of Politics*. At the present time he is in Europe for study and guest-lectures at several universities.

ALAN DEVOE, the author of *Down to Earth* and *Speaking of Animals,* contributes to various American magazines, usually, he says, "on man's dual role as at once part of nature and apart from it."

CAROL H. WEISS recently completed graduate studies in Political Science at Columbia University. She is now an executive for a national service organization.

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The Coming Education Issue

In the Commonweal's Education Issue, April 14, Professor Willis D. Nutting of Notre Dame University will publish an article, "Mark Hopkins, the Log and the Dollar." Here is the way he introduces a provocative plan for bringing the Christian tradition to potential leaders in all parts of the United States: "Our leaders come from all walks of life. They are of both sexes and all ages, and have been subject to many kinds of education or none at all. They must all be reached by our Christian liberal education. Most of them cannot and will not come to our colleges, and the colleges would not take most of them if they came, for there would be something wrong with their high school credits. We must go to them . . . "

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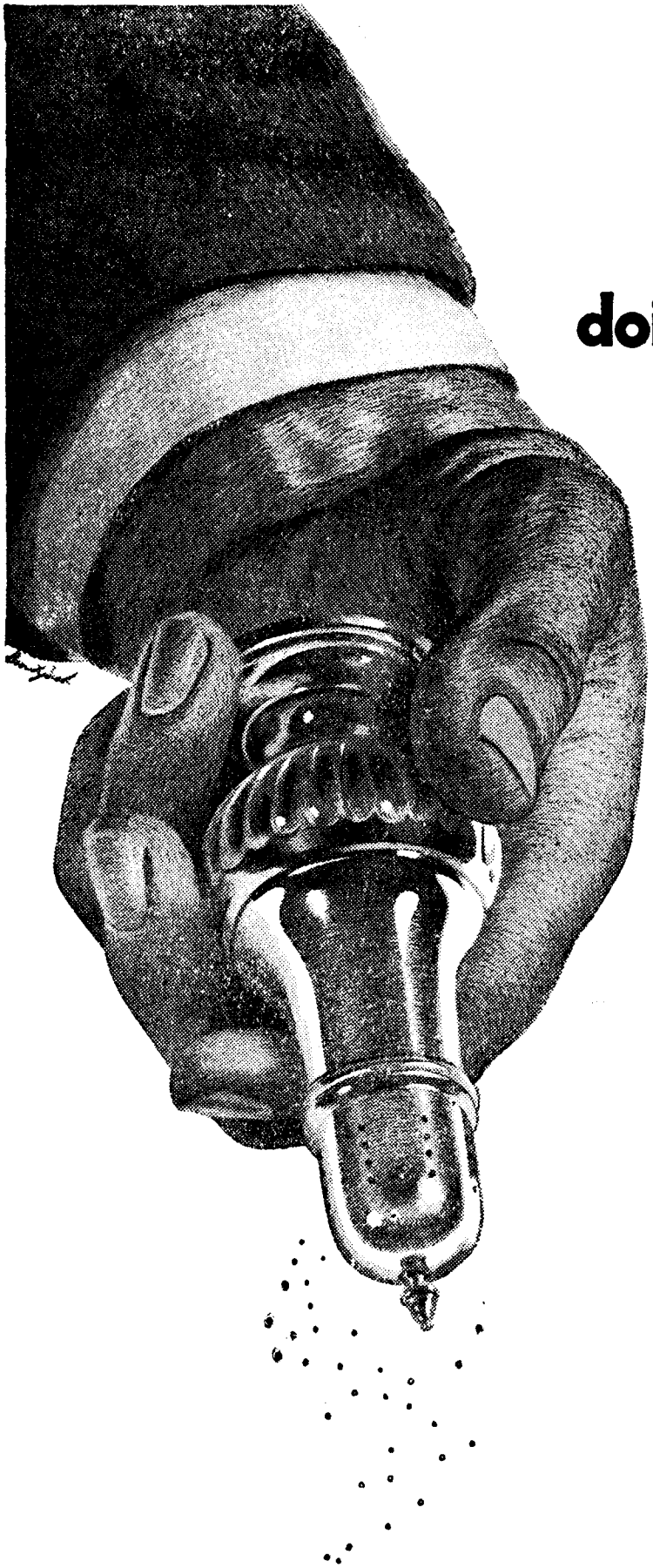

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